

ago I received an unexpected call from a woman at the bank who asked me in Chinese some questions related to my account. I was quite disoriented for a few minutes. What a change it was from the day when I arrived in Canada from China and struggled with my English to tell the bank staff that I wanted to open an account. And yet it conjured up an unsettling awareness of being perceived as part of a niche market, a racialization process at work, and indeed the class-based boundary of racial/linguistic tolerance. *Selling Diversity* effectively demonstrates that a discourse of diversity emphasizing the business value of racial/ethnic minorities in the global marketplace has permeated the making of immigration, multiculturalism and employment equity policies in the past decade. Chapter One comments on several concepts involved in the book: globalization, internationalization of policy-making, neo-liberalism, diversity, and gender analysis. Chapters Two to Five take up the three specific policy areas of immigration, multiculturalism, and employment equity, which relate to different aspects of citizenship and equality. The analysis draws on textual material including policy reviews, consultation papers, speeches, legislative debates, and commentaries. Discussion of each policy area generally consists of three parts. It starts with an account of the historical evolution of each policy. The second part turns to policy changes in the contemporary period (1993-2001). It draws readers' attention to a diversity discourse framed by a desire to exploit markets outside North America and neo-liberalism and then provides an assessment of the implications for the status of gender equality. The last part examines the extent to which internationalization of policy-making has happened in these three policy areas. Chapter Six concludes that "[t]he recent emergence of the 'marketing and selling of diversity' within these three areas marks a clear retreat from the post-war ideal of a 'just society'" (171). The authors contend that the conceptualization of diversity that they have discerned considers diversity, and people to whom this label is applied, as little more than "trade-enhancing commodities" (173). Furthermore, this new direction perpetuates class- and gender-based inequality. While the book does a superb job of identifying and critiquing the "selling diversity" discourse, the discussion of assumptions about the public/private dichotomy in the three policy areas

makes a less obvious contribution to the overall argument of selling diversity. As well, the book sheds limited light on the status of the Canadian state sovereignty in policy-making vis-à-vis the authority of international bodies and other nation-states; instead, the examination of the internationalization of policy-making is mainly focused on information sharing, co-ordination, and the diffusion of policy models between Canada and other countries. Despite these limitations, this book not only is an excellent source for those interested in immigration, multiculturalism and employment equity policies, it is also an important empirical and theoretical contribution to studies grappling with shifts in diversity politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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***Women and War.*** Jenny Matthews. Forthcoming, U Michigan Press; 192 pgs; 120 photographs; ISBN 0-472-08964-1; \$29.95T (paper).

For the past twenty years, Jenny Matthews has kept a portrait-diary of women's lives in struggles as far afield as Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Burma, Chechnya, Haiti, the United Kingdom, Guatemala, and the Sudan. This collection of her photographs and text is in turn startling, horrifying and moving; the emotions it evokes are as complex and wide-ranging as the struggles, losses and triumphs of the women she depicts.

Women's lives in wartime, as feminist researchers have argued, are not always lived that much differently from the way they are in peace; and it is the ordinariness of the women Matthews has photographed that reinforces this fact. Whatever the political situation in which they are caught, women must carry on their work. Matthews' book offers a series of images of how they manage this when all around them is dissolving into mayhem. Her photographs show all the cruel ambiguity of war: seeing them, we are reminded that when conflict erupts, women continue to give birth and tend the dying, plait hair, cradle young children, work as stevedores, plant fields. We see also that

they become tank drivers, security guards and combatants wielding AK-47s with a casual elegance that is at once a horrifying and a mesmerizing affirmation of the power that some women gain in times of immense social upheaval.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone teaching a course in gender and peace studies – or courses on women's work – since it so vividly illustrates the varied roles that women must take on in wartime and the aftermath. Looking at the book with others, I found that the images, and Matthews' powerful prose, were a catalyst to open up discussions of how women respond to the opportunities offered, as well as lost, in conflict zones. Because their social roles are shaped by so extreme a spectrum of experience, it is sometimes difficult to conceive that in wartime, some women can become violent, gun-toting amazons while others become caregivers to child soldiers; that some weep over children who have died of displacement-induced hunger while others search for the strength to care for children conceived through rape. Matthews' photographs offer a testimony to how women manage to bear all these contradictions; I am grateful for the opportunity she gives us to share stories that are so often untold.

For a preview of the images and text in Jenny Matthews' *Women and War*, go to <http://www.actionaid.org/newsandmedia/gallery/gallery.shtml#>

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***Writing in the Feminine in French and English Canada: A Question of Ethics.*** Marie Carrière. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002; viii + 243 pages; ISBN 0-8020-3620-1; \$55.00 (cloth).

Marie Carrière's study of the work of five contemporary women writers from French and English Canada is a welcome assessment of "writing in the feminine" from the critical vantage point that is permitted by twenty years' distance. A feminist literary movement of the seventies and eighties, "Writing in the Feminine" was launched in Quebec by women writers who had become

disenchanted with the arid formalism of Québécois "modernité" and wanted to broach questions of gender oppression and female specificity in their writing. The movement soon spiralled out into English Canada, generating a fertile exchange across the linguistic and cultural divide, between feminist writers of theoretically-informed, genre-blending texts. Carrière's approach is not to compare French and English versions of "Writing in the Feminine," however; instead, it is to read this body of writing from what she calls a "late nineties perspective," that is to say, through the lens of ethical philosophy: the ideas of Emmanuel Lévinas, Paul Ricoeur, and Luce Irigaray. This fresh angle not only permits her to include a few less obvious practitioners of "writing in the feminine" in her canon (she treats the work of the poet, Di Brandt, for example), it also allows her to complicate the writing's obvious concern with female selfhood with questions about ethical relations to others, especially to the other woman. Carrière's thesis, elaborated through a sequence of close readings, is that individual female selfhood is secondary to ethical intersubjectivity in this body of writing: identity, in other words, is subordinate to alterity. What occupies the place of alterity throughout is the maternal, a maternal understood not in conventional terms as the negative of the masculine but rather as a "same other," a point of identification and differentiation for the feminist subject. While *Writing in the Feminine* traces the lineage of poststructuralist feminist thinking about the maternal that influences this set of writers, the book does not acknowledge the critique of this preoccupation with the mother-daughter relation (made by Teresa de Lauretis and others) as another form of sexual indifference that obscures specifically erotic relations between women. Carrière's nuanced readings are attentive to differences in strategy and tone amongst this set of writers and she navigates their theoretical and philosophical debts adeptly, only occasionally offering interpretations that reduce the creative texts to paraphrases of theory. But the boldest, most interesting section of the book is the final one, which reshuffles the pairings of writers established earlier on in the book, tracing a different set of connections in light of some difficult questions about the implications of idealism, escapism, and reversions to other forms of transcendental